Numb. 54

The TATLER.

By *Isaac Bickerstaff* Esq;

Quicquid agunt Homines nostri Farrago Libelli.

From *Thursday August* 11. to *Saturday August* 13. 1709.

White's Chocolate-house, August 12.

Of the Government of Affection.

WHEN Labour was pronounc'd to be the Portion of Man, that Doom reach'd the Affections of his Mind, as well as his Person, the Matter on which he was to feed, and all the animal and vegetable World about him. There is therefore an assiduous Care and Cultivation to be bestow'd upon our Passions and Affections; for they, as they are the Excrescencies of our Souls, like our Hair, and Beards, look horrid or becoming, as we cut or let 'em grow. All this grave Preface is meant to assign a Reason in Nature for the unaccountable Behaviour of *Duumvir*, the Husband and Keeper. Ten Thousand Follies had this unhappy Man escap'd, had he made a Compact with himself to be upon his Guard, and not permitted his vagrant Eye to let in so many different Inclinations upon him, as all his Days he has been perplex'd with. But indeed at present he has brought himself to be confin'd only to one prevailing Mistress; between whom and his Wife, *Duumvir* passes his Hours in all the Vicissitudes which attend Passion and Affection, without the Intervention of Reason. *Laura* his Wife, and *Phillis* his Mistress, are all with whom he has had, for some Months, the least amorous Commerce. *Duumvir* has pass'd the Noon of Life; but cannot withdraw from those Entertainments which are pardonable only at that Stage of our Being, and which after that Season are rather Punishments than Satisfactions: For pall'd Appetite is humorous, and must be gratify'd with Sauces rather than Food. For which End *Duumvir* is provided with an haughty, imperious, expensive, and fantastick Mistress, to whom he retires from the Conversation of an affable, humble, discreet, and affectionate Wife. *Laura* receives him after Absence with an easie and unaffected Complacency; but that he calls insipid: *Phillis* rates him for his Absence, and bids him return from whence he came: This he calls Spirit and Fire. *Laura*'s Gentleness is thought mean; *Phillis*'s Insolence, sprightly. Were you to see him at his own Home, and his Mistress's Lodgings; to *Phillis* he appears an obsequious Lover; to *Laura*, an imperious Master. Nay, so unjust is the Taste of *Duumvir*, that he owns *Laura* has no ill Quality, but that she is his Wife; *Phillis* no good one, but that she is his Mistress. And he has himself often said, were he married to any Woman else, he would rather keep *Laura* than any Woman living; yet allows at the same Time, that *Phillis*, were she a Woman of Honour, would have been the most insipid Animal breathing. The other Day *Laura*, who has a Voice like an Angel, began to sing to him: Fie Madam, he cry'd, we must be past all these Gaieties. *Phillis* has a Note as rude and as loud as that of a Milk-Maid: When she begins to warble; Well, says he, There is such a pleasing Simplicity in all that Wench does.--- In a Word, the affectionate Part of his Heart being corrupted, and his true Taste that Way wholly lost, he has contracted a Prejudice to all the Behaviour of *Laura*, and a general Partiality in Favour of *Phillis*. It is not in the Power of the Wife to do a pleasing Thing, nor in the Mistress to commit one that's disagreeable. There is something too melancholy in the Reflection on this Circumstance to be the Subject of Raillery. He said a sour Thing to *Laura* at Dinner the other Day; upon which she burst into Tears. What the Devil, Madam, says he, can't I speak in my own House? He answer'd *Phillis* a little abruptly at Supper the same Evening; upon which she threw his Periwig into the Fire. Well, said he, thou art a brave Termagant Jade; Do you know, Hussey, that fair Wig cost Forty Guinea's? Oh *Laura!* Is it for this that the faithful *Chromius* sigh'd for you in vain? How is thy Condition alter'd, since Crowds of Youth hung on thy Eye, and watch'd its Glances? It is not many Months since *Laura* was the Wonder and Pride of her own Sex, as well as the Desire and Passion of ours. At Plays and at Balls, the just Turn of her Behaviour, the Decency of her Virgin Charms, chastis'd, yet added to Diversions. At Publick Devotions, her winning Modesty, her resign'd Carriage, made Virtue and Religion appear with new Ornaments, and in the natural Apparel of Simplicity and Beauty. In ordinary Conversations, a sweet Conformity of Manners, and an Humility which heighten'd all the Complacencies of good Breeding and Education, gave her more Slaves than all the Pride of her Sex ever made Woman wish for. *Laura*'s Hours are now spent in the sad Reflection on her Choice, and that deceitful Vanity (almost inseparable from the Sex) of believing, she could reclaim one that had so often ensnar'd others; as it now is, it is not ev'n in the Power of *Duumvir* himself to do her Justice: For tho' Beauty and Merit are Things real, and independent on Taste and Opinion, yet Agreeableness is arbitrary, and the Mistress has much the Advantage of the Wife. But whenever Fate is so kind to her and her Spouse as to end her Days, with all this Passion for *Phillis*, and Indifference for *Laura*, he has a Second Wife in View, who may avenge the Injuries done to her Predecessor. *Aglaura* is the destin'd Lady, who has liv'd in Assemblies, has Ambition and Play for her Entertainment, and thinks of a Man, not as the Object of Love, but the Tool of her Interest or Pride. If ever *Aglaura* comes to the Empire of this Inconstant, she will endear the Memory of her Predecessor. But in the mean Time, it is melancholy to consider, That the Virtue of a Wife is like the Merit of a Poet, never justly valued till after Death.

From

From my own Apartment, Auguſt 11.

As we have profeſs'd, that all the Actions of Men are our Subject, the moſt ſolemn are not to be omitted, if there happen to creep into their Behaviour any thing improper for ſuch Occaſions. Therefore the Offence mention'd in the following Epiſtles (tho' it may ſeem to be committed in a Place ſacred from Obſervation) is ſuch, that it is our Duty to remark upon; for tho' he who does it is himſelf only guilty of an Indecorum, he occaſions a Criminal Levity in all others who are preſent at it.

Mr. Bickerſtaff,

'IT being mine, as well as the Opinion of many others, that your Papers are extremely well fitted to reform any irregular or indecent Practice, I preſent the following as one which requires your Correction. My ſelf, and a great many good People who frequent the Divine Service at St. *Paul*'s, have been a long Time ſcandaliz'd by the imprudent Conduct of *Stentor* in that Cathedral. This Gentleman, you muſt know, is always very exact and zealous in his Devotion, which, I believe, no body blames; but then he is accuſtom'd to roar and bellow ſo terribly loud in the *Reſponſes*, that he frightens even us of the Congregation, who are daily us'd to him; and one of our Petty Canons, a Punning *Cambridge* Scholar, calls his Way of Worſhip a *Bull Offering*. His harſh untunable Pipe is no more fit than a Raven's to join with the Muſick of a Choir; yet no Body having been enough his Friend, I ſuppoſe, to inform him of it, he never fails, when preſent, to drown the Harmony of every Hymn and Anthem, by an Inundation of Sound beyond that of the Bridge in the Turn of the Tide, or the neighbouring Lions in the Anguiſh of their Hunger. This is a Grievance which, to my certain Knowledge, ſeveral worthy People deſire to ſee redreſs'd; and if by inſerting this Epiſtle in your Paper, or by repreſenting the Matter your own Way, you can convince *Stentor*, that Diſcord in a Choir is the ſame Sin that Schiſm is in the Church in general, you would lay a great Obligation upon us, and make ſome Attonement for certain of your Paragraphs which have not been highly approv'd by us. I am,

St. Paul's *Church-yard*, Auguſt 11.

SIR,

Your moſt Humble Servant,

Jeoffry Chanticleer.

It is wonderful there ſhould be ſuch a general Lamentation, and the Grievance ſo frequent, and yet the Offender never know any Thing of it. I have receiv'd the following Letter from my Kinſman at the *Heralds-Office* near the ſame Place.

Dear Couſin,

'THis Office, which has had its Share in the impartial Juſtice of your Cenſures, demands at preſent your Vindication of their Rights and Privileges. There are certain Hours when our young Heralds are exercis'd in the Faculties of making Proclamation, and other Vociferations, which of Right belong to us only to utter: But at the ſame Hours, *Stentor* in St. *Paul*'s Church, in Spight of the Coaches, Carts, *London* Cries, and all other Sounds between us, exalts his Throat to ſo high a Degree, that the moſt noiſy of our Order is utterly unheard. If you pleaſe to obſerve upon this, you will ever oblige, *&c.*

There have been communicated to me ſome other ill Conſequences from the ſame Cauſe; as, the overturning of Coaches by ſudden Starts of the Horſes as they paſs'd that Way, Women pregnant frighten'd, and Heirs to Families loſt; which are Publick Diſaſters, tho' ariſing from a good Intention: But it is hop'd, after this Admonition, that *Stentor* will avoid an Act of ſo great Supererogation, as ſinging without a Voice.

But I am diverted from proſecuting *Stentor*'s Reformation, by an Account, That the Two faithful Lovers, *Liſander* and *Coriana*, are dead; for no longer ago than the firſt of laſt Month they ſwore eternal Fidelity to each other, and to love till Death. Ever ſince that Time, *Liſander* has been twice a Day at the Chocolate-houſe, viſits in every Circle, is miſſing Four Hours in Four and twenty, and will give no Account of himſelf. Theſe are undoubted Proofs of the Departure of a Lover; and conſequently *Coriana* is alſo dead as a Miſtreſs. I have written to *Stentor* to give this Couple three Calls at the Church Door, which they muſt hear if they are living within the Bills of Mortality; and if they do not anſwer at that Time, they are from that Moment added to the Number of my Deceaſed.

Advertiſements.

On Monday next will be publiſh'd,

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